

ANAMNESIS BETWEEN MYTH AND EPISTEMOLOGY: RECOLLECTION IN PLATO AND CROSS-CULTURAL MEMORY SYMBOLISM

*ANAMNESE ENTRE MITO E EPISTEMOLOGIA: A
LEMBRANÇA EM PLATÃO E O SIMBOLISMO DA MEMÓRIA
TRANSCULTURAL*

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Abstract

The Platonic doctrine of anamnesis — recollection — stands at the intersection of epistemology and myth. Originating in the Meno as a response to the paradox of inquiry and further developed in the Phaedo and Phaedrus, anamnesis asserts that learning is the recollection of knowledge possessed by the soul prior to birth. This paper examines anamnesis in its philosophical and symbolic dimensions, arguing that it functions simultaneously as an epistemic method and as a salvific act embedded in a mythic anthropology. R. E. Allen (1959) and Norman Gulley (1954) illuminate its role as a

Received: 06 Jul 2025

Accepted: 12 Sept 2025

Published: 17 Sept 2025

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dialectical criterion for converting doxa into epistēmē. Dominic Scott's (1987) distinction between a "Kantian" and a "Demaratus" model reveals divergent accounts of the relation between innate cognition and philosophical attainment. Mircea Eliade's (1963) cross-cultural study of "mythologies of memory and forgetting" situates Plato's theory within a broader symbolic matrix that includes both Indian yoga traditions and Greek religious imagery. The analysis suggests that anamnesis resists reduction to either rationalist epistemology or religious myth, instead operating as a boundary concept that links intellectual recollection to the restoration of the soul's true nature. In remembering truth, the knower also reconstitutes the self.

Keywords: Plato. anamnesis. recollection. epistemology. myth. memory. Eliade. Allen. Gulley. Scott.

Resumo

A doutrina platônica da anamnese — lembrança — situa-se na interseção entre a epistemologia e o mito. Originária do Meno como resposta ao paradoxo da investigação e posteriormente desenvolvida no Fédon e no Fedro, a anamnese afirma que a aprendizagem é a lembrança do conhecimento possuído pela alma antes do nascimento. Este artigo examina a anamnese em suas dimensões filosóficas e simbólicas, argumentando que ela funciona simultaneamente como um método epistêmico e como um ato salvífico incorporado em uma antropologia mítica. R. E. Allen (1959) e Norman Gulley (1954) esclarecem seu papel como um critério dialético para converter doxa em epistēmē. A distinção de Dominic Scott (1987) entre um modelo “kantiano” e um modelo “demarcatiano” revela relatos divergentes sobre a relação entre cognição inata e realização filosófica. O estudo transcultural de Mircea Eliade (1963) sobre “mitologias da memória e do esquecimento” situa a teoria de Platão dentro de uma matriz simbólica mais ampla que inclui tanto as tradições indianas de ioga quanto as imagens religiosas gregas. A análise sugere que a anamnese resiste à redução tanto à epistemologia racionalista quanto ao mito religioso, operando, em vez disso, como um conceito limítrofe que liga a lembrança intelectual à restauração da verdadeira natureza da alma. Ao lembrar a verdade, o conhecedor também reconstitui o eu.

Palavras-chave: Platão. anamnese. lembrança. epistemologia. mito. memória. Eliade. Allen. Gulley. Scott.

1. Introduction

In the *Meno*, Plato stages one of the most enduring epistemological challenges in the history of philosophy, articulated through Meno's so-called "paradox of inquiry" (*aporia*): it appears that one cannot search for what one already knows, nor for what one does not know; for if one knows it, inquiry is superfluous, and if one does not know it, one cannot recognize it even if encountered (Plato, *Meno*, 80e). This formulation, sometimes referred to as the "paradox of learning," threatens the very possibility of philosophical investigation (*zētēsis*). Socrates' reply introduces the doctrine of *anamnesis*—the claim that learning is in fact recollection of knowledge possessed by the soul prior to embodiment. By reframing inquiry not as the acquisition of wholly new information but as the recovery of latent truths, *anamnesis* dissolves the paradox by granting the inquirer a cognitive foothold: one possesses, in a dormant state, the very content one seeks (Scott, 1995, pp. 19–27). Philosophically, this move links epistemology with metaphysics and even eschatology, since recollection presupposes the soul's pre-existence and acquaintance with the Forms prior to birth (Plato, *Phaedo*, 72e–77a). As Gail Fine (2014) has argued, this does not commit Plato to an entirely mystical account of learning; rather, it situates inquiry within a framework in which the mind already has a partial, if obscured, grasp of universal truths, making recognition possible when prompted by dialectical questioning. The well-known episode in which Socrates elicits geometrical knowledge from an uneducated slave boy serves as an empirical demonstration of the theory, illustrating how guided questioning can reactivate dormant understanding without prior formal instruction (Plato, *Meno*, 82b–85b; Kahn, 1996, pp. 139–145).

Beyond its immediate function in the *Meno*, the theory of recollection acquires a broader philosophical significance. As Pierre Hadot (1995) has noted, *anamnesis* can be interpreted as part of a spiritual exercise, linking the pursuit of knowledge with the soul's ethical transformation and its return to a more divine mode of being. In this light, recollection is not merely an epistemic mechanism but a soteriological process: to know is to re-align the soul with the intelligible order from which it has fallen. Thus, the *Meno's* paradox, far from undermining philosophical inquiry, becomes the occasion for Plato to advance a vision in which epistemology, metaphysics, and the moral life are inextricably intertwined.

Modern scholarship has treated *anamnesis* along divergent lines. For some, it is primarily a philosophical thesis about the source and justification of knowledge (Allen, 1959; Gulley, 1954; Scott, 1987). For others, it also participates in a symbolic tradition of memory and forgetting, connecting it to mythic and religious conceptions

of the soul's journey (Eliade, 1963). This dual character—logical and mythic—raises the central question of this study: can anamnesis be understood as both a rigorous epistemological strategy and a soteriological motif embedded in ancient religious imagination?

This paper will proceed in four steps. Section 2 examines the philosophical function of anamnesis, focusing on Allen's, Gulley's, and Scott's interpretations of its role in Platonic epistemology. Section 3 explores Eliade's comparative framework, drawing parallels between Platonic recollection and Indo-Greek mythic patterns of remembering as liberation. Section 4 analyzes anamnesis as a boundary concept, mediating between empiricism and rationalism, and between philosophical reasoning and religious salvation. The conclusion synthesizes these dimensions and considers their implications for contemporary discussions in epistemology and comparative philosophy.

2. The Philosophical Function of Anamnesis

This section frames anamnesis as the enabling condition of *zētēsis* and the hinge between merely having true beliefs and justifying them. It proceeds along three axes: (i) a resolutive function—answering the paradox of inquiry by positing prior cognitive grasp (Plato, *Meno* 80e); (ii) a justificatory function—converting *doxa* into *epistēmē* through *aitias logismos* (Plato, *Meno* 97e–98a; *Republic* 477a–480a; Gulley, 1954); and (iii) a methodological-pedagogical function—showing how dialectic “stirs up” latent structures and integrates them into an inferential whole (Allen, 1959; Kahn, 1996). While compatible with the *Phaedo*'s stronger metaphysics of pre-existence (72e–77a), the section also marks a minimalist reading on which recollection is chiefly a condition for inquiry and justification (Fine, 2014), then contrasts two models—continuous “Kantian” and episodic “Demaratus”—that distribute cognitive achievement differently across human lives (Scott, 1987).

2.1 Allen (1959): Inference and the Dialectical Process

R. E. Allen (1959) situates anamnesis in the *Meno* within the structure of dialectical reasoning rather than as an instance of episodic memory retrieval. On his reading, the famous “slave-boy” demonstration (82b–85b) is not an empirical experiment designed to show how new truths can be learned from perceptual evidence; rather, it exemplifies the process by which latent conceptual structures—already implicit within the mind—are activated and articulated through guided questioning.

Socratic elenchus thus functions to “stir up” (anakinein) true beliefs, which are then transformed into knowledge (epistēmē) by situating them within a web of inferential relations that cohere with the broader system of the Forms (Allen, 1959, pp. 167–170). This interpretation stands in contrast to approaches that read anamnesis as a purely mystical or mythic doctrine, emphasizing instead its rational and methodological dimensions. As Dominic Scott (1995) argues, the recollection theory in the *Meno* can be seen as a philosophical hypothesis that provides a logical solution to *Meno’s* paradox: if inquiry requires some prior grasp of the truth, then anamnesis offers the conceptual resources to explain how such a grasp is possible without collapsing into circularity. Similarly, Charles Kahn (1996, pp. 139–145) stresses that the slave-boy episode demonstrates the power of dialectical method to uncover latent structures of thought, making it less a piece of metaphysical psychology and more a paradigm of philosophical pedagogy.

Gail Fine (2014) has further refined this rationalist reading, noting that anamnesis in the *Meno* need not entail the full metaphysical apparatus presented in the *Phaedo*—including the pre-existence of the soul—though it remains compatible with it. Instead, she suggests, the emphasis is on the epistemic condition for the possibility of inquiry: knowledge emerges when the inquirer, prompted by the right questions, becomes aware of the justificatory connections between previously unexamined true beliefs. In this sense, anamnesis is less a supernatural gift than a disciplined exercise in making implicit knowledge explicit—a process that embodies what Pierre Hadot (1995) calls the “spiritual exercise” of philosophy, whereby the soul is trained to recollect its own rational capacities and orient itself toward the intelligible order.

2.2 Gulley (1954): Criterion for Converting Doxa into Epistēmē

Norman Gulley (1954) develops this rationalist line of interpretation by distinguishing two sequential stages in the process of recollection: first, the arousal of true opinions (orthai doxai), and second, their transformation into stable knowledge (epistēmē) through dialectical examination (pp. 194–195). In the *Meno*, Gulley argues, anamnesis does not rely on sensory experience as its epistemic foundation; the geometric diagrams employed in the slave-boy episode serve merely as heuristic devices to focus the interlocutor’s attention, not as empirical sources from which knowledge is derived (pp. 194–196). The core of the process lies in what Plato later terms *aitias logismos*—reasoned explanation or causal account—which “ties down” true beliefs, securing their truth and converting them into permanent knowledge.

This approach resonates with Socrates' image in the *Meno* (97e–98a) of untethered true beliefs as statues of Daedalus—beautiful and useful, but prone to escape unless fastened by an account of the reason why. As Dominic Scott (1995, pp. 74–80) observes, Gulley's emphasis on *aitias logismos* anticipates the epistemic distinction drawn in the *Republic* (477a–480a) between knowledge, which is stable because it is “tied” to what is, and opinion, which is unstable and mutable because it is directed toward the realm of becoming. Similarly, Gail Fine (2014, pp. 57–61) interprets the slave-boy episode not as a proof of metaphysical pre-existence, but as an illustration of how dialectical method can transform unexamined correct judgments into a systematic and justified body of knowledge.

Charles Kahn (1996, pp. 142–146) further reinforces this reading by noting that the sequence from aroused opinion to secured knowledge mirrors the pedagogical structure of Socratic dialogue: the interlocutor is first led to recognize implicit truths through guided questioning, and then to integrate these truths within a coherent inferential framework. In this light, anamnesis is less a mystical retrieval of forgotten perceptions than a disciplined activation and rational ordering of the mind's latent conceptual resources—a process that, for Plato, is both epistemic and formative of the philosophical soul.

2.3 Scott (1987): Kantian and Demaratus Models

Dominic Scott (1987) provides a valuable comparative framework for interpreting anamnesis by distinguishing between two distinct models. The first, which he labels the “Kantian” model (K), understands recollection as a continuous cognitive process underlying all conceptual thought. From early childhood, human beings spontaneously classify sensory inputs under universal concepts, a capacity made possible by the mind's pre-existent acquaintance with the Forms (Scott, 1987, pp. 348–349). In this view, anamnesis is not an episodic retrieval but a structural feature of cognition, akin to an *a priori* framework shaping all empirical experience. The second, the “Demaratus” model (D)—named after the historical episode in Herodotus (*Hist.* 7.101–104)—restricts recollection to rare, transformative philosophical awakenings in which empirical opinions are stripped away, revealing an innate “message” of truth previously obscured (pp. 349–350). Here, recollection is not continuous but discontinuous, marking moments of rupture in which the soul ascends from the mutable realm of opinion to the stable realm of knowledge. While the K model stresses universality and the democratic availability of the recollective capacity, the D model underscores its elitist and exceptional character, aligning with

a more pessimistic strand in Plato's thought—expressed, for example, in the *Republic* (491a–e) and *Phaedo* (82e–83a)—that most people will never achieve genuine philosophical understanding. Charles Kahn (1996, pp. 142–146) observes that the slave-boy episode in the *Meno* is compatible with both readings: it can be taken as a microcosm of the mind's constant ordering of experience under universals (K), or as a dramatic, once-in-a-lifetime unveiling of latent truth (D). Gail Fine (2014, pp. 63–68) further notes that these models reflect two competing emphases within the Platonic corpus: one in which anamnesis functions as a general condition for the possibility of inquiry, and another in which it is an exceptional attainment requiring the dialectical virtues cultivated only in the philosophical life.

Scott's distinction thus reframes anamnesis not merely as a solution to *Meno*'s paradox or as an epistemic mechanism, but as a theory about the distribution of intellectual achievement across human life. In doing so, it invites comparison with Pierre Hadot's (1995) account of philosophy as a way of life, where the transition from *doxa* to *epistēmē* is not inevitable but requires sustained spiritual and ethical exercise. Read in this light, the K model captures the universality of the mind's latent conceptual structures, while the D model captures the rarity of their full actualization—an interpretive tension that continues to animate scholarly debate on the *Meno*.

3. Myth, Memory, and Forgetting: Eliade's Comparative Lens

Here the analysis turns from strictly philosophical reconstruction to a comparative typology of “mythologies of memory and forgetting,” treating remembrance as liberation and forgetfulness as captivity (Eliade, 1963). The section clarifies scope and method: cross-cultural parallels (e.g., Matsyendranath's awakening; Mnemosyne and Lethe) function as heuristic analogies, not historical derivations (Verant, 1991; Burkert, 1972). Subsection 3.1 reads Indian narratives of ignorance and awakening as structural counterparts to Platonic recollection; subsection 3.2 situates Greek materials—Hesiod's Mnemosyne, Pindar's Lethe-resisting memory, and Plato's *Phaedrus* (249b–c)—as a native symbolic matrix within which anamnesis reconfigures poetic *mnēmē* into noetic vision. The upshot is that Plato's doctrine is intelligible both as epistemic practice and as participation in a soteriological grammar of memory.

3.1 Indian Symbolism of Forgetting and Awakening

Mircea Eliade (1963) examines recurrent mythological motifs in which forgetting symbolizes captivity in the human condition, and remembering marks the recovery of one's true nature. In the Indian yogic tradition, the tale of Matsyendranath illustrates this pattern. Having fallen under the enchantment of a queen in Ceylon, the yogi forgets his spiritual identity and remains in a state of amnesia until his disciple, Gorakhnath, restores his memory through symbolic acts—dance, song, and the recitation of esoteric truths (Eliade, 1963, p. 329). In Eliade's reading, Matsyendranath's forgetting is equivalent to spiritual death; his recollection (anamnesis) is the precondition of immortality.

The Upanishadic imagery reinforces this interpretation. In the Chāndogya Upanishad (VI.14.1–2), a man abducted from his city and blindfolded is freed when a guide removes the covering from his eyes, enabling him to return home. Śaṅkara's commentary interprets the thieves as false ideas and the blindfold as ignorance (avidyā), while the guide is the enlightened teacher (Eliade, 1963, pp. 330–331). Deliverance (mokṣa) thus consists in awakening to a reality that has always been present but obscured—a theme that closely parallels Plato's depiction of the soul recovering its vision of the Forms.

Eliade notes that in both Vedānta and Sāṃkhya-Yoga, the Self (ātman or puruṣa) is never truly bound, but only appears so due to ignorance. Awakening (bodha) or knowledge (jñāna) dissolves this illusion, allowing the Self to recognize its eternal freedom. In this respect, Indian soteriology and Platonic anamnesis converge: both construe forgetting as ontological error and recollection as salvific truth.

3.2 Greek Mythic Background: Mnemosyne, Lethe, and Immortality

Mircea Eliade (1963) extends his analysis of *reminiscentia* to ancient Greek myth, where Mnemosyne—personification of Memory—is not only a primordial goddess but also the mother of the Muses, the guarantors of poetic truth. In Hesiod's *Theogony* (32–38), Mnemosyne is described as knowing “all that has been, all that is, and all that will be,” situating her omniscience outside the flux of time. Poetic inspiration (entheos) thus grants access to a level of reality *ab origine*, in which the poet participates in the archetypal events of the gods rather than merely recounting human history. As Jean-Pierre Vernant (1991, pp. 69–72) observes, in this archaic

conception, memory is not a subjective mental faculty but a mode of being that restores the primordial order from which the cosmos itself emerged.

By contrast, forgetting is associated with the dissolution of identity and the negation of existential continuity. The river Lethe, as described in sources ranging from Hesiod to Pindar (Olympian Odes, 2.56–80), serves as the liminal medium by which ordinary souls lose their memories upon entering the underworld. Drinking from Lethe erases the narrative thread of the self, binding the soul to a cycle of ignorance and rebirth. Certain heroic or semi-divine figures—such as Tiresias in Homer’s *Odyssey* (Book 11) or Hermes’ son Ethalides in Pythagorean tradition—are granted the extraordinary privilege of retaining their memories after death, enabling them to possess knowledge inaccessible to the living (Eliade, 1963, p. 333; Burkert, 1972, pp. 162–164). Within this mythological framework, to remember is to transcend the mortal condition by re-establishing contact with a timeless and divine order, while to forget is to submit to the temporal and perishable. Plato’s doctrine of *anamnesis* inherits and philosophically reconfigures this symbolic opposition. The soul’s pre-incarnate vision of the Forms—its participation in the noetic realm—is veiled by the Lethean forgetfulness accompanying embodiment. Philosophical recollection is, in this light, an act of *mnēmosynē*, a deliberate reversal of the Lethean condition. The *Phaedrus*’ chariot myth (249b–c) preserves the mythic imagery of ascent and vision: the realm of *Mnemosyne* becomes the intelligible sphere of truth, while Lethe becomes the metaphysical amnesia of embodied existence (cf. Morgan, 1990, pp. 21–27). In both myth and philosophy, memory is the pathway to salvation, and forgetting the sign of existential captivity.

4. Anamnesis as a Boundary Concept

Finally, *anamnesis* is argued to be a boundary concept mediating canonical dichotomies without collapsing into either pole. Subsection 4.1 shows how Plato rejects empiricism as a source theory of *a priori* content (Gulley, 1954) while allowing perception to occasion recollection (*Phaedo* 73c–75d), thus distinguishing triggers from sources (Fine, 2014) and preserving the immediacy of noetic insight (Bostock, 1986). Subsection 4.2 integrates the epistemic with the soteriological: recollection restores access to an inferential network anchored in what truly is (Allen, 1959), and, as the *Phaedrus* insists, reorients the soul toward its pre-incarnate vision—an exercise of philosophical life in Hadot’s sense (Hadot, 1995). Read together, these dimensions position *anamnesis* at the nexus of rational method and mythic salvation, explaining both its durability and its systematic role in the dialogue-corpus.

4.1 Between Rationalism and Empiricism

Plato's doctrine of anamnesis resists reduction to a purely empiricist account of knowledge formation. As Gulley (1954) observes, any explanation of a priori knowledge that appeals to prior sensory experience—even if such experience is posited to have occurred in a previous life—succumbs to an infinite regress, since it merely pushes the epistemic problem back one stage without explaining the origin of the conceptual content itself (pp. 196–197). For Gulley, the Meno's theory therefore entails that the soul's knowledge must derive from a realm “different in kind” from present-life experience, which he identifies with the transcendent order of the Forms. On this reading, the Forms provide both the ontological ground and the epistemic warrant for knowledge that is universal, necessary, and independent of the contingencies of perception.

Yet Plato does not entirely exclude the role of sense perception in the recollective process. In the *Phaedo* (73c–75d), Socrates describes how certain sensory encounters can serve as triggers for recollection, through associations grounded in similarity (*homoiotēs*) or contrast (*enantion*). These occasions do not generate the content of knowledge but occasion its recovery. Dominic Scott (1987) interprets this as consistent with his so-called Kantian model, according to which innate knowledge works in cooperation with empirical input to organize and classify experience (pp. 348–349). In this model, the mind's a priori structures are indispensable, but they require sensory data as the stimulus for their activation.

By contrast, the Demaratus model—also identified by Scott (1987, pp. 349–350)—minimizes the role of sensory stimuli, treating recollection as a rare and transformative act in which the empirical “surface” of opinion is stripped away, revealing the rational core beneath. This position resonates with the *Phaedrus*'s chariot myth (249b–c), in which the vision of the Forms is regained not through gradual empirical refinement, but through an abrupt turning of the soul toward its noetic origin. Gail Fine (2014, pp. 63–66) similarly distinguishes between sensory triggers and sensory sources, underscoring that in Plato's account, empirical perception can catalyze recollection without contributing to the propositional content of what is recalled.

In this way, anamnesis functions as a conceptual bridge between empiricism and rationalism. It acknowledges the empirical conditions that can occasion recollection, while firmly denying that the truth-content of knowledge originates in perception. As David Bostock (1986, pp. 24–28) notes, this dual orientation allows Plato to preserve the immediacy and self-authenticating certainty of intellectual insight, while still accommodating the phenomenological fact that sensory experience

often precedes and prompts acts of knowing. Thus, the theory stands at the intersection of two epistemological traditions, reconciling their insights without collapsing into either extreme.

4.2 Philosophical and Salvific Dimensions

The epistemic function of anamnesis—the ascent from *doxa* (mere opinion) to *epistēmē* (true, justified knowledge)—is inseparable from its soteriological dimension. As R. E. Allen (1959) emphasizes, recollection restores the soul’s capacity to navigate the inferential and justificatory network that anchors knowledge in the unchanging reality of the Forms (pp. 167–170). This restoration is not a mere act of mental retrieval; it is a reactivation of the soul’s latent participation in an intelligible order. In Mircea Eliade’s (1963, p. 329) comparative framework, this process parallels the symbolic awakening from the “curse of ignorance” embodied in the goddess Durga in the Matsyendranath legend—a mythic victory over the forces that bind the individual to the realm of illusion and forgetfulness. Both in the Indic and Platonic contexts, liberation from ignorance is framed as a recovery of a primordial vision.

Plato’s *Phaedrus* offers one of the most vivid expressions of this linkage between epistemology and salvation. Only souls that have once “seen the truth” in their pre-incarnate state are eligible to be reborn as human beings capable of philosophical understanding (249b–c). This vision is not reducible to a stock of propositional knowledge; rather, it is an existential orientation toward the eternal realities that constitute true being (to *ontōs on*). Recollection (anamnesis), in this sense, is not simply the recovery of forgotten information but the re-alignment of the soul with its own authentic nature. As Pierre Hadot (1995, pp. 252–254) observes, the Platonic ascent is a spiritual exercise, requiring the transformation of the whole self, not just the intellect.

This union of epistemology and soteriology is further underscored in the *Phaedo* (72e–77a), where philosophical practice is portrayed as a “preparation for death,” freeing the soul from its embodied distractions and enabling it to rejoin the intelligible realm. David Sedley (2004, pp. 12–15) notes that, for Plato, the recollection of the Forms entails not only cognitive recognition but also moral purification (*katharsis*), since the apprehension of eternal truth demands the soul’s detachment from the mutable world. In this way, anamnesis becomes both a theory of knowledge and a salvific path: it bridges the philosophical imperative to know with the existential imperative to be transformed.

5. Conclusion

Plato's doctrine of anamnesis occupies a distinctive and liminal position at the intersection of epistemology, metaphysics, and mythic anthropology. In the *Meno*, it is presented as a direct response to the paradox of inquiry (*aporia*), which threatens the very possibility of learning by suggesting that one cannot search for what one already knows or for what one does not know. Plato resolves this dilemma by positing that the soul already possesses the knowledge it seeks, having acquired it prior to embodiment, and that philosophical inquiry serves to awaken this latent knowledge through the stimulus of dialectical questioning. The *Phaedo* develops this account within the broader framework of the Theory of Forms and the soul's pre-existence, grounding recollection in a metaphysics of immutable realities. In the *Phaedrus*, anamnesis is embedded within the grand myth of the soul's ascent to, and fall from, the realm of true being, thereby integrating the epistemic process into a cosmic drama of loss and recovery.

Modern scholarship has approached this doctrine from multiple interpretive angles, each emphasizing a different facet of its philosophical significance. Allen (1959) interprets anamnesis as a model of dialectical reasoning, in which the recollective process restores the inferential network linking true beliefs to their ontological grounds. Gulley (1954) highlights its function as the decisive criterion for transforming mutable opinion (*doxa*) into stable and justified knowledge (*epistēmē*) through *aitias logismos*—reasoned explanation. Scott (1987) offers a comparative framework, contrasting a universal, “Kantian” model that treats recollection as a constant feature of conceptual classification with a selective, “Demaratus” model that restricts it to rare moments of philosophical awakening. These interpretations collectively demonstrate that anamnesis is not merely an antiquarian doctrine, but a systematic attempt to articulate the preconditions for knowledge and the processes by which it becomes justified.

Eliade's (1963) cross-cultural perspective deepens this analysis by situating anamnesis within a broader symbolic and religious pattern in which remembering is tantamount to salvation and forgetting is equivalent to spiritual death. His parallels between Platonic recollection, the yogic liberation traditions of India, and the mythic function of Mnemosyne in ancient Greece reveal that the doctrine cannot be fully understood apart from its soteriological dimension. In this light, the Platonic philosopher's recollection of the Forms is both a cognitive act—restoring the truth obscured by embodiment—and a transformative reorientation of the soul toward its eternal origin.

Thus, anamnesis emerges as a boundary concept that traverses and unites multiple domains: it mediates between empiricism and rationalism by acknowledging the empirical occasions that can prompt recollection while denying that the content of knowledge originates in sensory experience; it bridges logical analysis and mythic narrative, embedding rational argument within symbolic structures; and it conjoins the pursuit of epistemic certainty with the quest for existential liberation. To recollect, in the Platonic sense, is not simply to add to one's store of propositions, but to recover the soul's true identity and to actualize what it has, in essence, always been.

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